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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001029

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT WASIT: 3ID DEP CG DISCUSSES WASIT SECURITY  
WITH ISF AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS

REF: BAGHDAD 367

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Wade Weems for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Wasit reporting cable.

12. (S//REL USA, ACGU) Summary. On 29 March, 3ID Deputy Commanding General-Support (DCG-S), BG Edward Cardon, met with Wasit civilian and military leaders at the Wasit Governance Center (GC), site of the ISF HQ during the recent fighting against non-compliant Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM) and criminal elements. The Governor, Provincial Council (PC) Chairman, CG 8th IA, and Provincial Director of Police (PDOP) appealed for additional CF support for ISF operations; described a recent inflow of fighters from outside Wasit; and reported that most neighborhoods of central Kut are under government control but militia elements continue to employ hit and run tactics against ISF. In a subsequent separate meeting, PC Chair Jabir told PRT TL and IPAO of his frustration in dealing with Sadrist politicians. He explained that although the majority of the al Kut populace does not support JAM the militia's position is strong in Kut, making negotiation right now unlikely. Sadrist political leaders do not appear to be involved in the recent violence in Al Kut. End summary.

13. (S//REL USA, ACGU) Accompanying BG Cardon were CDRs 214 Fires BDE, 8TH IA MITT, ODA 5121, 3ID POLAD, and PRT TL and IPAO. IA and IP officers and Iraqi government officials, all appearing drawn and tired, filled the Governor's cavernous office. Governor Abd al Latif Hamad Turfa's welcoming remarks were punctuated by volleys of small arms, machine-gun and RPG fire around the GC. Turfa stressed that "criminal elements are treated as outlaws, not as groups belonging to a party, we have not targeted parties, we target killers." Turfa said that it was time to "put an end to these people" and restore Kut to "what it was before." The Governor alleged that the fighting was fueled by an inflow of fighters from other provinces, especially Maysan. PC Chairman Mohamed Hassan Jabir, expressed disappointment in CF support to the ISF thus far, claiming that other provinces had received more, despite facing less violence. He assured the gathering that he had "exhausted all political efforts to restore calm" including calls to Sadrist officials in Najaf, Baghdad and Wasit.

14. (S//REL USA, ACGU) ISF leaders, echoed the requests from the political leaders for additional CF support. MG Othman Ali Farhoud Mishided Al-Ganimi, CG 8th IA, said his single battalion in al Kut had limited supplies, and that insurgents were effectively using snipers and hit-and-run tactics. He asked BG Cardon for air support and for the deployment of the 1st Georgian BDE (1GB) at select checkpoints to block enemy re-supply and reinforcement from Maysan in particular. PDOP, MG Abd Al Haneen Hamud Faysal Al Amir, also expressed dissatisfaction with CF support, emphasizing his need for air support, but said coordination between the IP and IA was good and morale high in IP units.

15. (S//REL USA, ACGU) BG Cardon noted that IA and IP units had performed well against militia activity but added, to general agreement from the Iraqi officials, that the ISF problem is holding the ground gained from the militants. "We need to generate more actionable intelligence through tips and informants," he said, "while conducting a public information campaign to inform the local population of ISF operations and solicit their support- information operations are essential." BG Cardon emphasized that CF had already provided substantial support and said he would discuss the additional requests for support in detail with MGs Othman and Haneen. He noted that Coalition assets were also supporting ISF operations in Baghdad and Basra, and therefore Wasit's needs had to be kept in perspective. Finally, he noted that CF support requires specific targeting information to be effective."

16. (S//REL USA, ACGU) PRT TL and IPAO met separately with PC Chair Jabir (Note. Jabir is a regular and reliable PRT contact. End note.) Jabir expressed frustration that agreements between provincial governments and Sadrists had been reached in "Najaf, Samawah, and Hillah, but not in Kut." Jabir said he made many attempts to initiate dialogue with Sadrist political leaders, including CoR member Iman Jalal al-Din and Wasit Sadrism office deputy Ra'ad Abdul Hussein, who was recently appointed by the CoR as the interlocutor between the Wasit government and Sadrists, but said his efforts had been fruitless, as the Sadrism politicians appeared to have "no rules" guiding them at the provincial level. He attributed this to the fact that Wasit Sadrists would not act without direction from Najaf, and thus far, nothing coherent had been issued. He also described dual Sadrism political and militant channels reaching up to Najaf,

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and that directions regarding militia action came through the militant channel, bypassing the political. When asked whether Sadrism politicians in Wasit could control or limit the violence even if they issued decisive statements, Jabir said they could not. And he said negotiation with militants seemed unlikely because "they are too strong" and must suffer some losses before they will seek negotiations here. When asked whether all the fighters on the street were JAM, he said that their ranks, which he guessed to number in the "hundreds," also included some Fadilah and Jaysh al-Sarkhi fighters as well as large numbers of unaffiliated criminals. He noted a recently arrested fighter, Hussein Chuni, had spent most of his adult life in prison for criminal activity and belonged to no group.

17. (S//REL USA, ACGU) Jabir said that the Wasit town of Aziziyah is "settled" because the citizens (possibly tribal leaders) forced an ISF-JAM agreement, but he said Numaniyah and Al Hayy were trouble spots that might spread to al Kut. (Note. As we spoke, Jabir received a report of eight vehicles arriving with fighters from al Hayy. End Note) He also said that a high percentage of fighters were coming from outside Wasit, naming Amarah as a source. Jabir said the citizens generally support the ISF's recent operations and that he personally receives numerous text-messaged tips on militant activities. Militants shut down markets, igniting looting and reducing access to fuel, food and other essentials. They also seized key facilities, including Wasit University. These actions fuel popular opposition to militant actions, Jabir said.

18. (S//REL USA, ACGU) Comment: Jabir's description of fractured and disoriented Sadrism political leadership matches PRT views, supported by reports of differences between Sadrism CoR members, the Wasit Sadrism office, Sadrism provincial council representatives, and Najaf political leadership. In Wasit, Najaf seems to work directly through the military chain of command either because the Sadrism political leaders are too disorganized to affect tactical events on the ground or they are unable to face down

militants emboldened by the outbreak of violence across the south. In either case, Sadrists political leaders do not appear to be involved in the recent violence in Al Kut. End Comment.

19. (U) This cable has been cleared by BG Cardon.  
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